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ABSTRACT

This research study sought to contribute to the development of validated criteria for evaluating supervisory performance in the area of rehabilitation counseling. First, it analyzed the relationship between rehabilitation counselor ratings of their supervisors' leadership behaviors and performance outcomes of these same counselors. Second, it examined the relationship between self-reported ratings of supervisors' leadership behaviors and the average performance outcomes attained by counselors under their supervision. South Carolina State Rehabilitation Agency counselors (N=169) and supervisors (N=20) responded to the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire and to a demographic questionnaire. Two variables were used as measures of leadership style or behavior: (1) initiation of structure (e.g., well defined patterns of organization, clear channels of communication); (2) consideration (behaviors exemplifying mutual trust, respect, warmth). Production of Individual Work Rehabilitation Plans (IWRPs) and number of case closures were used as measures of counselor performance. A significant relationship was not shown between the consideration behavior of supervisors and the performance outcomes of counselors, but a strong relationship was demonstrated between leaders' initiation of structure behaviors and average total closures attained by counselors. Counselor production was also shown to be related to how a supervisor perceived his or her initiation of structure behavior. (JW)

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SUPERVISORY STYLE AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN SOUTH CAROLINA'S STATE REHABILITATION AGENCY

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LEADERSHIP STYLE AND COUNSELOR PERFORMANCE IN REHABILITATION

Increasingly the mandates and requirements which fall within the role and function of rehabilitation administrators and supervisors involve cut-back management, competitive markets, changing technology, and accountability. Yet perhaps the greatest part of a supervisor's job involves personnel management and the leading and direction of employees. Clearly the most indispensable part of supervision is leadership (Eckles, Carmichael, & Sarchet, 1974).

Before leadership can take place however, those striving for leadership positions or those currently inhabiting those jobs must understand people, their problems, and must become acquainted with how to motivate (working through subordinates), and how to work with people. In addition to these expanded duties, the front-line supervisor's personnel functions have expanded to include training, counseling, managing the development of workers, participating in departmental grievance procedures, managing discipline, morale, safety standards and managing minority group members. Strauss and Sayles (1972) suggest that all these important variables influence first-line supervisors and the quality of their job performance as leaders. Additionally, they suggest that the front-line supervisor of today must understand the inter and intra relationships of human, organizational and societal variables that determine success.

Given the range, variety, and complexity of problems

confronting the first-line supervisors, the minimal empirical evidence that has gone into the evaluation of the supervisory position (Graves, 1981), this study attempted to address accountability of behavior from the front-line supervision perspective. English, Oberle, and Byrne (1979) suggest that:

> "two major problems identified as obstacles to the improvement of the supervisory evaluation system are the lack of a validated objective evaluation measure and the lack of validated subjective evaluation measures." (pp. 11-18)

This research seeks to add to the existing knowledge base in hopes of approaching more acceptable validated criteria for evaluating supervisory performance. The study had two main objectives. The first was to identify the relationship, if any, between counselor ratings of their supervisors' leadership behaviors and the performance outcomes attained by those same counselors. The Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) (Stogdill & Coons, 1957) was used for this purpose. The second objective was to examine the relationship between the self-reported ratings of leadership behavior by supervisors and the average performance outcomes attained by counselors under their supervision. This was measured by totaling the number of cases opened and the number of cases closed in fiscal year 1983-1984, by each counselor and each supervisor's office.

Method

Participants

The population used in this study was rehabilitation

counselors and their supervisors employed by the South Carolina Department of Rehabilitation Agency. The sample was selected from a directory of the South Carolina Department of Rehabilitation employees. The participants involved in the study included only those with the titles counselor, area supervisor, and office and/or project supervisor. Participants with the title counselor were those who were involved in direct caseload and service provision duties. The supervisors in this group were only those supervisors who supervised directly counselor functions. The supervisors, differed only in the location or sometimes size of their offices. An area supervisor was usually found in rural areas where it may have been necessary to have small satellite offices where no supervisor was necessary. An office and/or project supervisor is found in the larger population areas where a number of offices existed in one town or city, all having enough employees (four or more counselors) to warrant direct supervision. The counselor sample derived from the employees of the aforementioned supervisors.

Of the 215 South Carolina State Rehabilitation Agency employees thus identified, 189 (88%) responded. An examination of respondents' job classification indicated 169 of 193 (88%) counselors surveyed responded, as did 20 of 22 (91%) supervisors. Four of the counselors and three supervisors did not complete the demographic questionnaire, demographic data were not available for these seven respondents.

A total of 70% of the survey were males (128), and 30% or 54 females. In the supervisor group specifically 88% (15) were males

and 2 (12%) were females. Of the 182 respondents, 34 (19%) were Black 147 (81%) were white. In the supervisor group there were one (6%) Black and 16 (94%) whites. An examination of the respondents age showed a range from 24 to 64 years old. The average age of the total group was 40.6 years. The mean age of counselors was 40.4 and supervisors' mean age was 43.6 years old.

A frequency count of respondents who reported, showed 82 (45%) persons with Bachelor's degrees, 98 (54%) with Master's degrees, and two (less than 1%) with Doctorates. In the counselor group, 81(49%) had Bachelor's degrees, 83 (50%) had Master's degrees, and one (less than 1%) had a Doctorate. There was one (6%) holding a Bachelor's degree, 15 (88%) holding Master's degrees, and one Ph.D. in the supervisor group. The salaries of the total group ranged from $15,000 to $41,000 with $23,710 being the mean salary of the total group. The average salary for counselors was $22,958; supervisors $31,760. The mean years of experience for the total group was 12.4 years. For counselors the mean years of experience was 11.7 years; supervisors 16.4 years.

TABLE 1

Descriptive Statistics of Age, Annual Salary
And Years of Experience
(N = 182)

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Age	40.63	9.142	24 yrs.	64 yrs.
Annual Salary	$23,710	552.30	$15,000	$41,000
Years of Experience	12.36	7.288	1 yr.	29 yrs.

TABLE 2

Descriptive Statistics of Age, Annual Salary, Years of Experience and No. of Employees SUPERVISORS (N = 17)

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Age	43.59	8.486	30 yrs.	62 yrs.
Annual Salary	$31,760	600.60	$19,000	$41,000
Years of Experience	16.47	5.810	7 yrs.	29 yrs.
No. of Employees Supervised	26.18	15.930	4	60

TABLE 3

Descriptive Statistics of Age, Annual Salary, and Years of Experience Counselors (N = 164)

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Age	40.47	9.187	24 yrs.	64 yrs.
Annual Salary	$22,958	482.20	$15,000	$33,000
Years of Experience	11.72	6.54	1 yr.	26 yrs.

Instruments

The instrument used in this study consisted of a demographic questionnaire and the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ). The demographic questionnaire included 10 items requesting information on sex, age, race, job title, and years in present position.

The LBDQ was developed by the staff of the Personnel Research Board at Ohio State University, as one project of the Ohio State Leadership Studies, directed by Dr. Carroll L. Shartle, in 1957 (Stogdill & Coons, 1957). The LBDQ evolved from the work of Hemphill (1949) and was developed to obtain group members' description of a supervisor.

There are 12 subscales for this instrument and each is composed of 5 to 10 items, yielding a total of 100 test items. The two subscales of primary interest to this research (initiation of structure and consideration) have 10 items each, within the total 100 items. These two subscales have been shown to account for 83% of the variance in the LBDQ (Halpin, 1957).

Initiating Structure refers to the leader's behavior in delineating the relationship between himself and the members of his group, and in engaging in establishing well defined patterns of organization, channels of communication, and ways of getting the job done. Consideration refers to behavior exemplifying friendship mutual trust, respect, and warmth in the relationship between the leader and members of the group.

The LBDQ-Form XII (North, 1983) a modified version of this test, was used for this study. Modification of the LBDQ was done to change the emphasis of the questionnaire, from the observed supervisor behavior by a counselor, to a supervisor reporting his or her own behavior.

The manual used for the test suggested a change in instructions and questions to accomodate the shift in emphasis from supervisor to self (Stogdill, 1965). The only change was, for example, in item 1, the statement "Acts as the spokesperson of the group" was changed to "I act as the spokesperson of the group." The standard version of the LBDQ was used by counselors in describing the leadership styles of their supervisors, and the modified version was used by supervisors to describe their own leadership behavior (North, 1984). The LBDQ manual reports that there are no norms because the test was developed as a research tool and not for assessment selection, or assignment purposes.

Stogdill (1965) computed the reliability for each subscale through a variety of samples including industrial, military, and educational settings. The reliability was determined by a Kuder-Richardson formula and each item was correlated with the remaining items in its subscale. The reliabilities ranged from 0.54 to 0.91 except for the reliability for Production Emphasis which was .38 for senators. However, the eight other samples, the reliability average was .72 with lowest being .54.

In a recent study, North (1983) used the LBDQ and the Job Description Index Scale (JDI) to examine the relationship between counselors' and supervisors' perceptions of supervisor behavior

and counselor satisfaction with supervision, counselors scored a mean of 34.8 in rating their supervisors' behavior on the consideration subscale of the LBDQ, and a mean of 36.8 on the initiation of structure subscale of the LBDQ. So the average scoring range is between 30 and 45 on each subscale.

Performance Measures

The two variables used as performance outcome measures were devised in three ways. First, the counselors' total number of IWRP's and total number of status "26" closures were correlated individually (by counselor) with each counselors' scores of their supervisors' consideration and initation of structure. Second, the data were divided into groups by supervisor and the counselors they supervised. A supervisor's self-reported scores on consideration and initiation of structure were correlated with the total IWRP's and "26" closures attained by counselors under their supervision. Then third , scores of counselors' ratings of the leadership behaviors of their supervisors were subtracted from their respective supervisors' self-ratings of leadership behaviors. The individual difference scores were then correlated with each counselor's total IWRP's and total status "26" closures. (Totals of performance measure, were obtained for fiscal year 1983-84).

Procedure

The participants were mailed a packet containing a cover letter from the Deputy Commisssioner for field services with a letter of anonymity and confidentiality from this researcher, in

the packet they received. Also included were the LBDQ XII (or revised version for supervisors), a demographic questionnaire, and a self-addressed stamped envelope. After 4 weeks, a second packet was mailed to all non-respondents. There was an 88% response rate at the end of the 6 week period, thus was no need for a third mailing. A record was kept of all participants by assigning code numbers to the instruments they received. These numbers were located at the top right-hand corner of the instruments. The coding was specific enough to locate the office, supervisor, and counselor assigned that particular instrument. The supervisors' instruments were coded to identify the office under supervision and the supervisor asssigned that particular instrument.

Since the LBDQ was suggested to be used for those offices or supervisors with four or more employees, an office or supervisor with less than four counselors was dropped from the data pool.

Analyses

Descriptive statistics were computed concerning both counselor and supervisor demographic information.

Pearson product moment correlations were used to correlate the summary scores of counselor ratings of their supervisor's consideration and initiating structure behaviors on the LBDQ with 1) the counselor's total number of IWRP's in fiscal year 1983-1984, and 2) the counselor's total number of status "26" closures for the same year. The Correlation was used to correlate the summary score of supervisors'self-ratings of leadership behavior (consideration and initation of structure) on the LBDQ with the

1) the total IWRP's attained by counselors under their supervision during fiscal year 1983-1984, and 2) with the total status "26" closures by counselors under their supervision in the same year. Additionally, the Correlation was used to examine the relationship between the total score of supervisors' self-ratings of leadership behavior (initiation of structure) on the LBDQ with the total status "26" closures by counselors under their supervision in the fiscal year.

The Pearson product moment correlation was used to examine the correlation between the counselors' ratings and their supervisor's self-ratings on each of the two leadership behavior dimensions (initiation of structure and consideration) and each of the performance outcomes (total IWRP's and total status "26" closures). To accomplish this, the difference score was derived by substracting the supervisor's summary rating on each subscale from counselors' ratings of their supervisor's behavior on the same subscale. For example, if a supervisor's score was 37 on consideration and a counselor's, under his or her supervision, was 41 on consideration, the difference is 4. Each difference score was the absolute value of the difference disregarding positive or negative signs.

A Pearson r was used to correlate the score of counselor ratings of supervisors and supervisor self-ratings of leadership behaviors (consideration and initiation of structure) on the LBDQ and the yearly total of each counselor's 1) IWRP's under their supervisor and 2) counselor's status "26" closures under their supervision in fiscal year 1983-1984.

RESULTS

This research examined the relationships between four variables. Two variables were used as measures of leadership style or behavior; they were initiation of structure and consideration. The two variables used as measures of counselor performance were plans (IWRP's) and closures (status "26"). The intent was to investigate selected measures of counselors' performance.

The aforementioned analyses of the data did not demonstrate a significant relationship between the consideration behavior of supervisors and the performance outcomes of counselors under their (supervisors) supervision in a given fiscal year. A strong relationship was shown between the initiation of structure behaviors and the average total "26" closures attained by counselors under their supervision. The correlation, $r(18) = 0.46$, $p < .05$, indicates that 21% of the variance in the average total number of status "26" closures attained by counselors is shared in common with supervisors' self-ratings of initiation of structure. Consideration, which did not correlate significantly with IWRP's and "26" closures, did correlate highly with initiation of structure $(167) = .42$, $p.05$. Also, IWRP's which did not correlate significantly with either leadership variable, did correlate with "26" closures $r(167) = .17$, $p < .05$.

TABLE 4

Descriptive Statistics of C Scores,
S Score, Plans and Closures

Variable	Mean	STD DEV	Sum	Minimum	Maximum
Consideration	32.44	4.15	5483	19	45
Structure	36.75	6.38	6210	16	53
Plans	73.19	29.98	12369		163
Closures	45.99	21.78	7773		89

TABLE 5

Descriptive Statistics of C Scores,
S Score, X Plans and X Closures
(N = 20)

Variable	Mean	STD DEV	Sum	Minimum	Maximum
Consideration	32.25	3.54	645	25	38
Structure	40.05	4.26	801	31	48
Mean Plans	75.2	17.36	1504	48	120
Mean Closures	44.95	19.46	899	3	68

TABLE 6

Descriptive Statistics of C Diff, S Diff, Plans and Closures

Variable	N	Mean	STD DEV	Sum	Minimum	Maximum
C diff*	168	4.09	3.007	688	0	14
S diff**	168	6.77	7.493	1138	0	74
Plans	168	72.44	30.597	12220	0	163
Closures	167	48.80	4.352	8150	0	544

* Difference scores of consideration.
** Difference scores of initiation of structure.

DISCUSSION

In a recent study, Stout (1984) examined the relationshp between the measures of rehabilitation supervisors' task orientation (structure) and relationship orientation (consideration) behaviors and scores on measures of job satisfaction, stress, and health problems. Stout(1984) investigated supervisory consideration and structuring behaviors because in previous studies consideration had shown low to moderate correlations with job satisfaction (Cherniss, 1980). Other studies by Landy and Trumbo (1980), and Yuki (1981) showed that turnover and grievance rates were related to structure and consideration behaviors of supervisors.

The results of Stout's study (1984) suggest that high-structure and high-consideration behaviors of supervisors may be most effective for producing the highest job satisfaction, lowest stress, and fewest number of problems. In the present study the data analyses yield one somewhat significant correlation findings between counselor ratings of supervisory consideration and structure behaviors and counselor performance (production) in IWRP's and status "26" closures. However, when Stout in acknowledging an implication for selection, training and development of supervisors suggests that qualified individuals should be selected for supervisory positions based on their ability and willingness to exhibit high-structure and high-consideration behaviors; this relates to the significant finding of the present study. Here, data showed that counselor production is related to how a supervisor perceives his or her initiation of structure behavior. It seems that for those supervisors who rate themselves highly on initiating structure, their counselors had a higher mean "26" closure rate. Thus, for those supervisors who rated themselves high on consideration, their counselors closed less cases in status "26".

It is important to continue research in this area and continue to build the knowledge base for future investigations. The relationship between productivity and supervision needs continued research, not only in the state agency setting but in facilities as well. Also, as the emphasis in rehabilitation continues to change to increased fiscal accountability and orientation, rehabilitation as a profession needs to address the

definition and clarification of goals and roles so that selection, training, and evaluation of employees will serve as impetus for not only individual growth and development, but also for organizational growth development as well.

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